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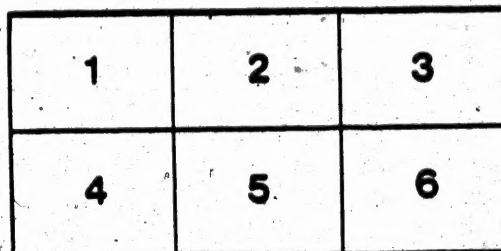
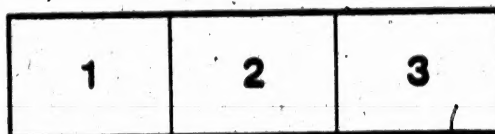
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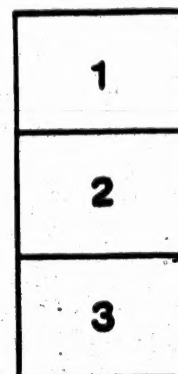
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UNIVERSAL CHILDHOOD DRAWN TO CHRIST:

WITH
AN APPENDIX

CONTAINING REMARKS ON

THE REV. BARNES'S "Moral Condition of Childhood."

BY
H. P. BLAND.

TORONTO :
WILLIAM BRIGGS,
75 & 80 KING STREET EAST.
MONTREAL : C. W. COATES.
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1882.

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✓ This SERMON was inserted in the *Sunday School Banner* for 1876,
p.p. 226-228, 257-259.



SERMON.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—JOHN 12. 32.

THESE memorable words Jesus uttered in Jerusalem a few days before He suffered. He had that solemn event full before Him. The hour so frequently named by prophetic page was at hand, Calvary was hard by. The materials of the cross were already shaped. In less than a week, His body, then in the fullness of youthful vigor, would undergo death in its most exposed, most shameful, most excruciating form. Jesus knew all this, and moment by moment He was voluntarily and steadfastly approaching it.

Certain Greeks having come to Jerusalem to be in readiness for the Feast of the Passover, expressed to Philip a wish to "see Jesus." Possibly these Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith were devout men, waiting for "the consolation of Israel." Gentiles from the

East, in the wise men, at the commencement of Christ's life came to Him, Gentiles from the West sought Him at its close. Philip telleth Andrew; and, "again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." Gentiles seeking Jesus, brought His grand mission vividly before Him. It is not said that the desired interview took place, but it is said how the cross in its painfulness and glory gathered interest from the circumstance. From the painfulness He shrank,—to the glory He hastened. With the one he was troubled,—with the other, as the fulfilment of the Father's counsel and the accomplishment of His mission, He was absorbingly engrossed. "Now is my soul troubled," is the language of the one—"now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out," is the expression of the other. And then embracing both Jew and Gentile in His mediatorial gaze—comprehending the past, the present, the future results of His crucifixion, He uttered the pregnant words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

What does Jesus mean by this lofty language? His uplifting will be the means of drawing all unto Him—not all men strictly, but *all*. The term "men" being an expletive. In what sense are we to understand this?

Let us look at some of the theories given in explanation.

Some say that the phrase is a general one, and that it simply means that Christ's teaching and life have an attraction for the entire race;—that His character

influences, either more or less, every class of society; that it imperceptibly moulds and assimilates, and refines and ennobles the most discordant elements; that it weaves, out of the vilest and most diverse materials, a kingly web of glory and of beauty. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," find their authority, and enforcement, and exemplification in the life and death of Jesus. Men are turning aside to an extent never before known, to "gaze" upon "this great sight." Some critically, some wonderingly, some admiringly, some lovingly. What millions of eyes are just now gazing upon the crucified Nazarene! This, they say, is what Christ means by drawing all unto Him.

The statement is literally and beautifully true, that Jesus, the uplifted One is strangely moving the world, but this fails to meet the requirements of the text. Christ says *all* are to be drawn to Him—the expression is too universal and positive to admit of modification.

Again, some say that Jesus means *all His chosen ones*, all who will absolutely come by the irresistible compulsion of sovereign grace. The notion of a limited atonement is becoming increasingly and deservedly unpopular. It cannot live, except by a strange process of mental reservation, in these evangelistic days. Men who have been accustomed to hold it, have either lost faith in it, or find it to be so

much in the way of the offer of a free salvation that they say nothing about it. It would be an inconsistency and an offence to make the "water of life" accessible only to a few. Jesus could not use the term *all* in such a sense.

Some again try to give harmony to the text by saying, that *Christ is drawing and will eventually draw all in a sense sufficiently extensive to warrant the strong term used.* The earth shall yet be "full of the knowledge of the Lord." "Holiness" shall be written upon "the bells of the horses," commerce shall be consecrated, traffic hallowed, the sumptuous earth, in its continents and islands, a Sabbath scene of harmony, contentment, and joy. While subscribing heartily to this view, we cannot admit it as sufficiently meeting the requirement of the text. We have no authority for reducing the universality of the term there employed, if there is a sense in which it can be legitimately used.

Some say, *Jesus draws all to Him in the way of enlightenment,* He being "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Strictly true as a fact, but not, we think, in this case to the point. To *enlighten* and to *draw* are two distinct terms. The one is to shed light, to reveal, to constitute responsibility, the other is to pull toward an object as a net is drawn to the shore, and it is in this sense we conceive that Christ uses the term in the text.

Who, then, in the second place, are thus drawn, what may we suppose to be the doctrine of the text—

"all?" What all? It is clear that this term does not apply to adults, either men or women, neither of whom can be said to be universally drawn to Christ.

But what should prevent it being applied to *infants*—all who are born into the world—the entire of humanity in the first stage of its existence? If it can, and I know no valid argument against it, the requirement of the text will be literally met, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* unto me." What reason then have we for supposing that this term may be applied to childhood?

Our first reason is drawn from Romans 5. In this remarkable chapter the first Adam and the second Adam are placed over against each other. A parallel is drawn between the first man Adam, and the second man, the Lord from heaven. These two are placed before us as the representative heads of the human race. What they did touches the entire race,—the sin of the one touches it, and the righteousness of the other touches it, and the righteousness reaches as far as the sin. If the Apostle does not say this, his words are to my mind inexplicable. "For, if through the offence of one many," or the many, "be dead, much more the grace of God," &c. Evidently the number injured and the number benefited is precisely the same—the "many" in each case. The "many," the race, died, the "many," the race, have received "the grace of God," and "the gift by grace" which restores to life. Yea, the Apostle says this grace "hath abounded,"—this grace is not only co-extensive with the death and counteracts it,

but it superabounds and overflows. And it is observable that the Apostle is here speaking, not of the conditional benefits of the Atonement, those which come to man on repentance and faith, but of the *unconditional*, those which affect the race before accountability begins. His argument is, if infancy be dead through Adam, infancy receives the gift of grace through Jesus Christ. In verse 17, he puts the argument in another form. In verse 15, he shows that the number benefited is as large as the number injured; in verse 17, he shows that the dominion of death is counteracted by the dominion of life. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more," &c. If this does not mean that the life by Jesus annuls the death by Adam, what are we to understand by it? Ver. 18 puts the same in different and, if possible, stronger language, "Therefore, as by the offence of one," &c. The "offence" of Adam brought "condemnation" to all—the "righteousness" of Christ has brought "justification" to all, and not justification merely, not simple acquittal from Adam's sin, but "*justification of life*;" as the first Adam brought a principle of death, so the second imparts a principle of life. Verse 19 is equally conclusive, "For by one man's disobedience many," the many "were made sinners," &c., accounted sinful, though as yet they had committed no actual offence, "So by the obedience of one shall many," the very same many just named, "be made righteous," i.e. treated and dealt with as righteous, though, as yet, through tenderness of age they are unable to trust in Christ as their personal Saviour.

Is not this, then, the outcome of the Apostle's argument? Children are constituted sinners through Adam—they are constituted righteous through Christ—they die spiritually through the one, they live spiritually through the other; they are not merely justified or acquitted, but they have a "justification of life." Hence children dying, pass to heaven as a necessary result of the work done *for* them, and done *within* them by the death of Christ. Not merely are they *justified*, but made to *live*—their justification is to "life,"—were this not the case they would not be prepared for the life of holiness in heaven.

In Matt. 18. 2, we read that Jesus "called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst of them," &c. One, doubtless, that was just able to walk, and yet not too large to be carried in the arms, for Mark says in his description of the same transaction, "And when He had taken him in His arms He said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.'" As much as if Christ had said, there is something in childhood piety so gentle, so sweet, so unassuming, so free from self and pride, that except in this respect your heart shall resemble the heart of a little child, ye cannot become subjects of my kingdom. Verse 4. "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as *this* little child," referring to the one which He held in His arms, "is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven." Is it possible to conceive that Christ should hold up a being as a model for Chris-

tians, who himself was not a Christian? Is it possible to conceive that the child which Jesus casually held in His arms, and which he referred to as a typical disciple, was not himself a disciple? The adult disciple, if he would be great in the kingdom of heaven, must resemble the child disciple. Verse 5. "And whosoever shall receive." &c. Christ specially regards children as His property, and wishes them to be received as such. "In my name, recognize them as my representatives, for whoso receiveth them, receiveth me." Not only are adult disciples to become like them, but adult disciples are to acknowledge and deal with them as justified and quickened by virtue of the Atonement of Christ.

And this great work wrought *for* and *in* the child forms one of the principal reasons for infant baptism. The water sprinkled is the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace already given—of a work already accomplished. The rite of baptism admits to membership with the visible Church, one whom Christ has already adopted and received. Both ministers and parents are apt to lose sight of this, and consequently fail to extend to Christ's little ones suitable spiritual shelter and training.

But Jesus said (Matt. 19. 14)—"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." By the phrase "kingdom of heaven," our Lord evidently means His own spiritual Church. The analogy of passages confirms this view. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of

mustard seed," &c. Matt. 13. 31. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal." If then little children are members of Christ's spiritual kingdom on earth, and that such is the case He distinctly affirms, some gracious change must have taken place within them. By nature they are outside the kingdom, by grace they are inside, constituent members of Christ's invisible Church.*

In reply, then, to our first question *Who are drawn?* We reply, children universally—"for, as by one man's disobedience 'the' many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall 'the' many be made righteous."

Our next question then is, *How are they drawn?* We reply, irresistibly, by the influence and action of the Holy Spirit as the efficient Representative of the Cross. During the years of accountability none are drawn to Christ savingly, but by the exercise of repentance and faith; but childhood being unaccountable, and incapable of any active concurrence, is drawn absolutely into saving contact with the Atonement.

But again, *To what extent are they drawn?* Some say, enlightened merely, as we have already seen. There must be, however, something more than simple illumination. Illumination implies a responsible agent—one who can take advantage of the light; childhood

* See Whedon and Watson *in loco*; also Hibbard in his admirable work on Religion in Childhood, for a full exposition of the passages just quoted.

is not responsible, and, therefore, is *drawn* into living contact with Jesus. "Scripture authority settles the point, that as the child has a sinful nature, some change must be wrought upon it to make it fit for the kingdom of God if it dies, or to prepare it for right responsible action if it lives, and that change is of the nature of *life*, a quickening of our nature, not merely an acquittal from the penalty or change of relation." *

One question further on this part of the subject, *Why are they drawn?* They are Christ's purchased ones. He draws them to Himself by right of conquest. They have not sinned actually, they are incapable of it; and until they knowingly and willingly do wrong, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." As God's "righteous" and divinely appointed "servant," He justifies the "many." He sees of the "travail of His soul and is satisfied." Children are not only the heritage of parents, but they are His heritage. We remember how many of these ransomed ones die in infancy, and we perceive how grandly is the prophecy fulfilled, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong."

We conceive, then, by way of recapitulation, that when Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me," He had special reference to childhood—that the entire humanity of the race, from the birth of the first child down to the very latest born, comes within the saving attraction of the Cross; that as through the offence of one "the" many

* Hibbard, page 4.

be dead, *much more* the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto "the" many.

If this, then, is the delightful and impressive doctrine of the text, we inquire, in the third place, what are the practical questions to which it may legitimately give rise?

Palpably one is, *If all are drawn to Christ in childhood, is there a possibility of their remaining where they are thus drawn?* Turn over to Matt. 18. 10. "Take heed that ye despise not," i.e., that ye do not neglect, "one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels," i.e., their departed spirits, "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The argument is this: neglect not the living little ones, for such is the regard which God has to the departed ones that He admits them into His immediate presence. And then follows the beautiful parable of the one lost sheep of childhood humanity which the Good Shepherd finds and rejoices over. "Even so," says Christ, evidently showing that by the lost sheep He typifies the child, "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

If, then, God the Father, wills that the little ones shall not perish—if God the Son as the Good Shepherd has sought and saved them—if Christ as the second Adam has removed the curse inflicted by the first, and placed the little ones in a state of salvation, need we ask if there is a possibility of their remaining in this

state! The Word of God, and the records of religious instruction and moulding in all ages say, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." "The promise is unto you and to your children."

The possibility of childhood piety admits of multiplied illustration. Prayer, faith, love, the great constituent elements of the religious life, are all due to a child.

If, then, all are drawn to Christ in childhood, and if there is a possibility of their permanently remaining where they are thus drawn, upon whom rests the responsibility of their not so remaining?

In the first instance upon the child himself. Who can question the Divine intention and endowment who has a lively recollection of his own childhood experience, or of watching the forth-putting of religious life in others? The child, even where there is no external help, struggles in its own feeble, undeveloped way, and sometimes under the most unfavorable circumstances,

"Like an infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry,"

blindly evincing the existence of the life Divinely implanted.

Responsibility also rests upon the parent. A very grave, but most delightful responsibility. A parent,

especially the mother, may fashion the plastic material of childhood almost at will. But how few do this for Christ! How few, even Christian parents, work for childhood piety or expect it! "A converted child," to quote language as vigorous as true, "is to many parents like an apple that had ripened before its time, they are afraid it is unsound at the core." Conversing with a good man recently on this subject of childhood piety, the remark was regretfully made: "I wish I had known this thirty years ago." The past is gone, let the present be marked by large views of Christ's dealings with the young. Treat the child as a child. Assist him in coming to Jesus. His spiritual gait, like his physical, may be a tottering one. Don't question his piety on that account. Adult Christians sometimes blunder and err without altogether sacrificing converting grace. Don't expect more from the child than from the man. The piety of the former is child piety, very immature. Let it be dealt with and fostered as such.

Responsibility also rests upon the Church in its offices, institutions, and arrangements. The Church has been criminally doubtful of the children. "Oh, they are too young, they don't understand, let them wait a while!" They do understand a great deal more about spiritual things than they have credit for. If children are members of the Church on the authority of Christ, and we recognize them as such in the formula of baptism, why should not the Church keep its eye and hand upon them, and retain them where Christ

has placed them? Why should our young people be permitted to run away from God, till years of disobedience and folly scar the most susceptible period of their existence? "They that are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God." Christ has planted the tender one in His House; let it be trained delicately, watched patiently, borne with sympathisingly, and by and by it shall flourish in "the courts of our God." Ministers, parents, Sabbath-school teachers, members, all are responsible in keeping the child in the Church where Christ has placed him.

Our third and closing question is, if all are drawn to Christ in childhood, and if there is a possibility of their remaining where they are drawn, *if the separation should take place through the neglect of the parent or the Church, is there not in the estimation of Jesus the entailing of serious guilt?* On this point we are not left to mere supposition. Touching it Jesus has spoken very plainly. "Take heed that ye despise not," or neglect, "one of these little ones." "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth Me." Having made little children members of His spiritual Church, He evidently designs that they should be recognized and treated as such by the officers and members of His Church visible. And He so clearly identifies Himself with His child, that he distinctly affirms, that whoso shall receive the child in this sense receives Him. Open the door of the Church to the child, and the Saviour will walk in with His little representative. And lest there shall be a disposition to overlook th

"little ones," to neglect them, and thereby cause them to stumble, He utters the fearful warning, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones," i.e. forbid or throw difficulties in its way, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."





APPENDIX.

DR. BURWASH'S Essay on "The Moral Condition of Childhood" is thoughtful and elaborate, but some of his statements are, in my judgment, open to question.

I demur, first, to the new birth in its process and condition, as the Essayist puts it. On p. 7, we read the new birth signifies "everywhere a conscious work of the Spirit, applying the Word to renew the heart, and conditioned upon a personal faith in Christ." On p. 8, speaking of sinful and corrupt human nature, the writer says, "And this is the moral state in which we are born, and from which we can be delivered only by the great change of the new birth." A somewhat poor look-out for those who die in infancy, idiocy, and heathenism, none of whom can experience the new birth in the way conditioned by the Essayist. Was Peter correct, when he said to Cornelius and his Gentile friends, "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him?"

If none enter Christ's spiritual kingdom, but those who have a "conscious work of the Spirit, applying the Word to renew the heart, and conditioned upon a personal faith in Christ," was prophecy correct when it said, that, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong," (Isaiah 53. 13), and that unto Him "shall the gathering of the people be?" (Gen. 49. 10). I fear that comparatively very few of the world's population will enter the "twelve gates" of the "New Jerusalem," if the new birth so conditioned is to be the Shibboleth of admission; while retaining in its integrity the Methodist doctrine of the new birth, how much the definition of the Essayist would have been improved by the infusion of John Wesley's wideness.*

I demur, further, to the use which the Essayist makes of 1 Cor. 15. 22. "In Adam all die," p. 12, Paul's argument is, mortality through Adam,—immortality through Christ. If spiritual death is the meaning of the first sentence, spiritual life must be the

* Acts 10. 35.—"*But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness*"—"He that first reverences God, as great, wise, good; the Cause, End, and Governor of all things; and, secondly, from this awful regard of Him, not only avoids all known evil, but endeavours according to the best light he has, to do all things well. *Is accepted of Him*—Through Christ, though he knows Him not. The assertion is express, and admits of no exception. He is in the favour of God, whether enjoying His written word and ordinances or not. Nevertheless, the addition of these is an unspeakable blessing to those who were before, in some measure, accepted: otherwise God would never have sent an angel from heaven to direct Cornelius to St. Peter."
—*Wesley's Notes.*

meaning of the second: "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive," which would be rank universalism. The use which the writer makes on the same page, and on p. 26, of Eph. 2. 3. is also questionable. When Paul says, "And were by nature children of wrath even as others," he is not referring to unconscious childhood or birth-sin, but as Adam Clarke pertinently observes to "persons exposed to God's displeasure because of their sins." There may be transmitted depravity, and transmitted guilt in the sense of exposure to penalty, but there cannot be transmitted blameworthiness. Until the child commit conscious sin he cannot in any sense be an "object of Divine wrath."

I demur, also, to the application which the Essayist, p. 14, makes of Rom. 8th: "But when the commandment came, sin rose up into life and I died." "This," says the writer, "is St. Paul's presentation of what we call the *innocency of childhood*." The context shows that Paul meant the self-satisfied, Pharasaic formalist, whose language to his neighbour, virtually had been, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou," of which blind state he himself had been for many years a specimen, suddenly convinced of sin, and his spotless robes converted into "rags." The chapter is wholly destitute of proof that Paul had before him, what "we call the *innocency of childhood*." The blindness of the formalist is there, but not the moral condition of the unconscious child.

Especially do I demur to the *petitio-principii* method which the Essayist more than once adopts

(pp. 23-26), in assuming that "justification" and "life" through Christ are strictly conditional. All the blessings named by Paul in that magnificent paragraph to the Romans (v. 12-21), in which the second Adam is set over against the first are said to come only to those who have fulfilled the conditions,—they do not come absolutely to the unconscious child, only to the consciously responsible one, and then only on the fulfilment of certain conditions. "To interpret it otherwise would be to make this passage teach absolute universalism," p. 23. The very thing that it does teach in a modified form, so far as the irresponsible are concerned,—condemnation to all,—"justification" to all through Christ. Methodism has nothing to fear but everything to hope from the important position in which Christ and Paul put unconscious childhood. The reasoning of the Essayist obliges him in making the consequences of Christ's atonement conditional, to make the consequences of Adam's sin also conditional, for they stand in the same federal category, and further leaves him without definite satisfactory reply to the question, what "becomes of those who die before moral life is fully and fairly developed?" (p. 28.) As the sin of the first Adam has touched them, and the "justification" and "life" of the second are still out of their reach, their eternal safety we are told, is among the secret things upon which "God has given no revelation." (pp. 28-29). And yet Christ said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in

heaven their angels," their departed spirits, "do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18. 10.) The "little ones" are evidently all right when they leave us. The Good Shepherd definitely illumines *their future*, but who owns those who may remain? The Essayist seems at a loss to know how to meet this,—he cannot speak with any revealed certainty. But if the Good Shepherd does not own these "lost sheep" of irresponsible humanity, who does? The "wolf?" Surely not; and yet these are the only claimants.

Our Book of Discipline, p. 28, distinctly asserts: "We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the Atonement, are members of the kingdom of God, and therefore graciously entitled to baptism."

Richard Watson says (Works iii. p. 80): "But as to those 'infants' who die, doubtless God 'cuts short His work,' as He does in those adults whom He calls away almost immediately on their conversion to Himself," thus placing the infant on the same platform with the justified adult, as far as the two will admit of being so placed. Again (vol. 10, p. 454): "All the mystery in the case, therefore, arises from this, that in adults we see the free gift connected with its end, actual justification, by acts of their own repentance and faith; but as to infants, we are not informed by what process justification, with its attendant blessings, is actually bestowed, though the words of the apostle are express, that through 'the righteous-

ness of One,' they are entitled to it." "It follows.... that the Holy Spirit may be given to children; that a Divine and effectual influence may be exerted on them, which, meeting with no voluntary resistance, shall cure the spiritual death and corrupt tendencies of their nature," &c.

Rev. Dr. Pope said, 12 years ago: "Christian baptism is the seal and the pledge at the threshold of life, of a Christian grace into which we are *born*."

Christ's Incarnation shows God *taking hold of man*.—Christ's death on the cross as an atonement for sin, shows universal man down to the end of time *taking hold of God*. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw—~~draw~~—all unto me." Every one before he actually sins is drawn savingly to Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5. 14); or, according to the most approved rendering, "then all died." That is, the demand of the law was met,—it had no further hold upon them,—they were free from its condemnation. So far as the sin of Adam affects the race in its irresponsible condition, our Divine Representative has met it absolutely and unconditionally,—all are free from its condemnation,—dead to that, until they actually sin themselves. In the late Franco-German war, all the Germans in England that were eligible, were called upon to serve in the German army. One, seeing his German friend walking about the streets of London, asked him how it was that he was not gone to the war? "Oh," he re-

plied, "because I am dead." "You are dead," was the answer; "explain yourself." "Well," he said, "I did not want to go to the war, and I found a young man who was willing to go as my substitute,—he went instead of me,—he took my place, and was killed. Now that was counted just the same as though I had been killed, and so I am considered a dead man, and they can never take me to be a soldier any more." In this sense, we conceive, our Great Representative took the place of the race,—in His death, all die. The law has no further demand upon them,—they are absolutely the property of Christ,—“redeemed”—until they actually and wilfully sin, and then, “if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” The Atonement of Jesus so covers the case of the actual offender, that if he repent and believe in Christ, God is “faithful and just to forgive” him.

That theory of an Atonement, which finds no certain place in it for the irresponsible, whether living or dying,—which has to leave them in a dense fog of uncertainty, until “the first dawn of moral life” is presumptively defective.

But is there any necessity for the out-cropping of evil as the will of the responsible child begins to play,—is there any necessity for the downward tendency which still exists, to gain the upper hand,—for the dawning reason of the child to choose the “broad way” in preference to the “narrow one?” By no means. The Essayist (p. 29), assumes this necessity,

and such most likely will be the tendency, if the parent and the minister think it *must*,—that Satan holds the immortal property and not Christ, but instances can easily be found,—faintly alive as the Church is to her duty and privileges in this respect,—where those who have been “planted” by careful parental culture “in the house of the Lord,” have intelligently flourished “in the courts of our God.” John Baptist was “filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb.” While conversing not long ago with a thoughtful Methodist lady, with pleased surprise she said, “It must be so; my Hattie is a Christian,” referring to her five-year old child. “She tells me that she loves Jesus. She prays, and lives like a Christian. I have no reason to doubt her, and yet I have been looking for some change of a specially marked character.”

The “justification and life” of childhood, may lead under suitable parental training to a conscious and intelligent trust in Jesus. The regeneration or new birth of the adult Christian, are terms which cannot properly be applied to the unconscious child,—hence in many, confusion of thought, but as the seed holds a living principle, which, when suitably placed, develops into a plant of symmetry and fragrance, so the embryotic life of the irresponsible child may effloresce into a true, Scripturally defined, Christian life, sustained by faith in an apprehended Atonement, and edified by the “Word that liveth and abideth for ever.” If the marks of the new birth are there, are we to repudiate them because the blowing of the spirit’s wind

does not harmonise with our preconception,—because it is the heart of a *little child* that is “opened,” and not the demonstrative transformation of a prodigal youth !

A gentleman, inspecting a large farm in England, was especially impressed with the excellence of the sheep ; with great earnestness he said to his friend, the owner, “Do tell me how you manage to raise such splendid-looking sheep as these ?” His answer was, “I take care of my lambs, sir.”

Let Methodism do this with her *little ones*,—let her have faith in *them* and *Him* whose purchase they are. —“Why should the foe thy purchase seize ?”—and their Divine lover, in a way unprecedented in her history, will make her “righteousness to go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth.”



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